

Message Text

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FOL REPEAT JAKARTA 4657 SENT ACTION SECSTATE

APR 17

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ATRN CPAS APER ID

SUBJECT: GOI BAN ON CAR IMPORTS

REFS: A. STATE 71122; B. JAKARTA 3069; C. JAKARTA 3147;

D. JAKARTA 4226

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY GRATEFUL FOR ASSISTANT
SECRETARY'S EFFORTS OUR BEHLAF. DIPLOMATIC CORPS
HAS APPROVED AIDE MEMOIRE FOR FONMIN STATING HOPE
SITUATION WILL BE RESOLVED ON BASIS FORMER PRACTICE.
WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AT THIS
POINT TO ANNOUNCE U.S. HOLDING UP DESPATCH OF EXPERTS.
IF SITUATION NOT RESOLVED SOON, WE
PROPOSE AS INTERIM MEASURE TO IMPORT CARS AS OFFICIAL MISSION
VEHICLES; ANOTHER POSSIBLE SOLUTION WOULD BE TO ISSUE DIPLOMATIC
PASSPORTS TO OFFICERS HAVING "SAME AS DIP" STATUS
UNDER BILATERAL AGREEMENTS. REQUEST
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DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS. END SUMMARY

2. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR ASSISTANCE BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WITH AMBASSADOR THAJEB IN DRIVING HOME IMPLICATION OF VEHICLE BAN. WE ARE TAKING EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DO SAME. LAST WEEK, DIPLOMATIC CORPS HELD DRAFTING SESSION AND APPROVED AIDE MEMOIRE TO FONMIN WHICH: (A) NOTES THAT CORPS HAD RECEIVED NO AUTHORITATIVE INFORMATION FROM FONDEPT; (B) ASKS FOR CONFIRMATION THAT OFFICIAL CARS AND POVS ARE EXEMPT FROM PROHIBITION; AND (C) SEEKS ASSURANCE THAT NON-DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL COULD IMPORT CARS, AND THAT PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR RESALE WOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED. EMBOFFS HAVE ALSO HAD CONTINUING CONTACT WITH CUSTOMS AND FONDEPT, BUT HAVE RECEIVED NO INDICATION OF IMMINENT CHANGES. GOI OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO ASK FOR OUR PATIENCE WHILE THEY TRY TO WORK OUT MATTERS WITHOUT CASUING LOSS OF FACE FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR SITUATION.

3. AS TO FOLLOWING EXAMPLE SET BY JAPANESE (PARA 3, REF A), WE BELIEVE US ANNOUNCEMENT OF NO MORE EXPERTS WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AT THIS TIME. WE ARE IN DELICATE STAGE OF GETTING GOI ACCEPTANCE REDUCED AID LEVEL. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT PRESSURE OF THIS TYPE -- AT LEAST BEFORE OTHERS MEANS HAVE BEEN TRIED -- COULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD AND LINKED TO GENERAL REDUCTION. IT MIGHT THEREFORE FURTHER COMPLICATE OUR PROBLEM WITHOUT ADVANCING AUTOMOBILE IMPORTS. INSTEAD, BELIEVE WE WHOULD CONTINUE INDICATE OUR CONCERN ON EVERY APPROPRIATE OCCASION WITH GOI THAT IT WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO ASSIGN INDIVIDUALS TO INDONESIA WHO, FOR LACK OF TRANSPORTATION, WILL BE UNABLE FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY. WE PLAN EXAMINE ON CASE BY CASE BASIS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY DESPATCH OF EXPERTS, WITH VIEW TO HOLDING UP THOSE WHERE PRESENT BAN IS LIKELY PRESENT PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES AND DIMINISH CHANCES FOR PROJECT SUCCESS.

4. AS DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL FROM REFS B THROUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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D, MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCKS TO IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES FOR MISSION PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN:

A. FAILURE OF CUSTOMS TO ALLOW IMPORTATION OF OFFICIAL VEHICLES, DESPITE ASSURANCES TO CONTRARY GIVEN IN FORDEPT NOTE OF MARCH 25.

B. UNWILLINGNESS WITHIN GOI TO ALLOW "SAME

AS DIPLOMATIC" STATUS TO AID AND DLG AS FAR AS IMPORTS ARE CONCERNED, DESPITE BILATERAL AID AGREEMENT OF 1951 AND EXCHANGE OF NOTES FOR DLG IN 1967.

5. IF MATTER NOT RESOLVED IN NEAR FUTURE, AND ON ASSUMPTION THAT FONDEPT ASSURANCE THAT MISSION CAN IMPORT OFFICIAL CARS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN PRACTICE BY CUSTOMS, OUR PLAN WOULD BE FOR TEMPORARY PERIOD TO IMPORT AUTOS FOR NON-OFFICER PERSONNEL, STAFF PERSONNEL AND WARRANT OFFICERS, AND OTHERS, AS OFFICIAL VEHICLES AND SO LICENSE AND INSURE THEM.

6. FOR AID AND DLG PERSONNEL IN STATUS OF "SAME AS DIPLOMATIC", ANOTHR POSSIBLE SOLUTION MIGHT BE ISSUANCE OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS (ON SAME BASIS AND RANK AS STATE OFFICERS AND SERVICE ATTACHES), THUS MAKING UNNECESSARY DRAWN-OUT DISCUSSIONS WITH GOI RE DEFINITION "SAME AS". ALTHOUGH CUSTOMS NOW REQUIRES ONLY DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT FOR CLEARANCE AUTOS, FONDEPT PRESSING VIEW THAT PRIVILEGE SHOULD BE ACCORDED ONLY TO PERSONS ON DIPLOMATIC LIST. IF FONDEPT VIEW PREVAILS, WE WOULD THEN ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER ADDING TO DIPLOMATIC LIST (AS ATTACHE OR ASSISTANT ATTACHE, AS APPROPRIATE) SUCH AID AND DLG PERSONNEL WISHING IMPORT CARS.

7. WE INTEND TO MAINTAIN CONTINUING REVIEW OF SITUATION AND WILL MAKE FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS AS REQUIRED IF GOI FAILS TO REGULARIZE SITUATION.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY WOULD BE GRATEFUL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR ANY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS ON ABOVE. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE RECEIVING INFORMATION ON ANY COMPARABLE EXPERIENCE WHICH MIGHT BENEFIT US (E.G. ITALY, INDIA OR BURMA).
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